

Update : 2017-12-04 00:00:00
 City has lost a civic crusader



Annisul Huq

Dhaka city dwellers have lost a civic crusader with the death of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Annisul Huq. He will be long remembered as a great visionary and for his good works and wisdom, said urban experts and green activists, reports UNB. They said despite being elected mayor with the ticket of a political party, Annisul ran his city administration rising above politics and thus became a true city father and change-maker. Ex-chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) urban expert Prof Nazrul Islam, Professor of the Urban and Regional Planning Department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) Sarwar Jahan, Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) General Secretary MA Matin, and Poribesh Bachao Andolan (Poba) Chairman Abu Naser Khan spoke to UNB to share their thoughts on the life and works of the late mayor. They said though Annisul could not fully implement his dream of a clean, green, healthy and a livable modern city with smooth civic services, he set good example for his successors to make it happen following his pursuit. They said Annisul's initiatives to remove illegally raised billboards, illegal vehicle parking, construct roads, modernise footpaths, restore discipline in transport management, modernise drainage and waste management system, check pollution, protect environment, increase greeneries and set up modern public toilets were very effective to turn a chaotic city into a clean, healthy and humane one. Even, he earned huge appreciation from the top leader of Awami League's arch rival BNP for his good jobs, a rare example in Bangladesh's politics, as Khaleda Zia described Annisul as an active, modest and a good person. In a condolence message, she also acknowledged that the late mayor showed his skill in performing the duties bestowed upon him. "The country's people will ever remember his role in social-economic-political affairs." Prof Nazrul Islam told UNB that Annisul succeeded developing himself as the true city father with his good works, sincerity, dedication, honesty, bold initiatives and extraordinary leadership quality. "What he did in just two and a half years is more than our expectation, and none of his predecessors could accomplish such feat. He got little time, but did many things like a change-maker. He is a shining example of what a true public representative should be," he said. Nazrul said

Annisul started working for implementing his election pledges of making a clean, green, healthy and a livable modern city the day after he had assumed the office of the DNCC mayor on May 6, 2015. He said the late mayor accomplished the daunting task of evicting illegal billboards, which were hung ugly in the many parts of the city, within four to five months of his taking over office. The urban expert said Annisul freed some roads and public spaces and land from illegal occupation braving various obstacles with his courage and strong commitment. He said the DNCC mayor successfully removed the truck stand from Tejgaon, and illegal vehicle parking from near different bus stoppages in Gabtoli, Mohammadpur, Mohakhali and Kalyanpur areas, improving the traffic situation significantly. The urban expert said Annisul changed the look of Gulshan, Banani and Baridhara areas through his beautification and tree plantation drive, and installed CCTV in major city areas to check crimes and ensure security of the city dwellers. Besides, Nazrul said he constructed modern public toilets, took initiative to restore discipline in transport sector, introducing 4,000 new buses under five to six operators and setting up several U-loops to ease traffic. He said Dhaka has long been labeled as one of the worst livable cities, but Annisul took the challenge to remove that stigma. “He could not complete his tasks. I’m in doubt whether we’ll get such a competent, sincere and committed mayor like him to do his unfinished jobs.” The expert said Annisul faced a little trouble in dealing with mosquito-borne Chikungunya menace in the middle of this year. “Though Dhaka WASA is responsible for resolving the city waterlogging problem, the mayor could have played a bigger role as well. I think he could not perform well in this regard.” Prof Sarwar Jahan said Annisul Huq tried to do many things coming out of traditional political trend and what the traditional mayors do. “He got success as he didn’t run his administration on political consideration. He couldn’t have removed the truck stand from Tejgaon, had he thought about party or political interest.” He said as a mayor he had very limited power, but he changed environment of Gulshan Banani and Baridhara with his sincere initiatives and visionary leadership. “He could do many more things, especially for lower and lower-middle class people, had he been properly empowered as he had plans, sincerity and honesty,” said the urban expert. Sarwar said the late mayor used to take opinions of urban experts before undertaking any city development or public service project. “No mayor did it in the past. I hope his successors will follow the examples he set for turning Dhaka into a smart and planned city.” Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) General Secretary MA Matin said “We got a mayor after a long time who initiated works sincerely for developing the city with a clear vision and commitment.” He said Annisul implemented some of his plans and changed the environment and look of the some city areas in just half of his five-year term. “The late mayor made a modern and environment and pedestrian-friendly footpaths in Gulshan and Baridhara areas, improved traffic system, check pollution, regulated unauthorised rickshaws, set up well-managed public toilets, beautified roads, brought a qualitative change in waste management and service delivery system .” Matin said Annisul had many other plans to make the city truly green and livable one with smooth civic services. “He did many things within a short time. We hope his successors will implement his uncompleted plans and dreams.” He also said if the future mayors follow Annisul as a role model they will surely be successful and people will have a modern and habitable city. Paribesh Bachao Andolon (Poba) Chairman Abu Naser Khan said Annisul’s strategy for implementing the city development plans were extraordinary. “We usually work out many plans, but don’t implement those. But Annisul Huq started successfully implementing many plans for building a planned and healthy city.” He said the late mayor worked untiringly to improve the environment of the city. “He planted several thousand trees at different places as part of city beautification drive and protect environment.” Naser said the late mayor started working for modernising parks, increasing greenery, construct more roads, footpaths and drains and promoting roof-top gardening. “Overall, I can say as a mayor Annisul could deliver on all fronts. He was a man of commitment.”

Print